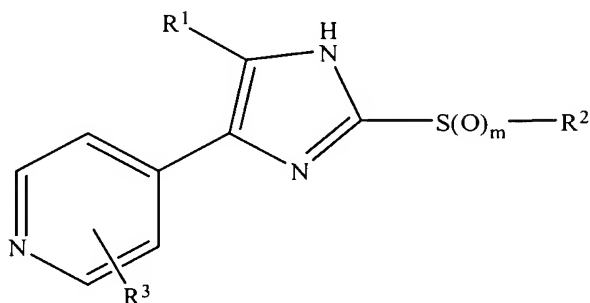


IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-15 (Canceled).

Claim 16 (Currently Amended): A 2-thio-substituted imidazole derivative compound
of the formula I



wherein

R¹ is aryl which may or may not be substituted by a halogen atom;

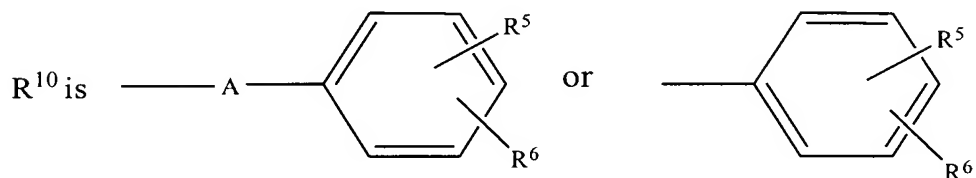
R² is selected from the group consisting of

- a) aryl-C₁-C₄-alkyl, and
- b) C₁-C₆-alkyl;

R³ is selected from the group consisting of

- a) NR⁴R¹⁰
- b) NR⁷COR¹⁰, and
- c) C₁-C₆-alkoxy;

R⁴ is H;



or, if R³ is NR⁷COR¹⁰, R¹⁰ is R⁸,

R^5 and R^6 , which may be identical or different, are H, halogen, C_1 - C_6 -alkoxy or C_1 - C_6 -alkyl;

R^7 is H, C_1 - C_6 -alkyl or benzyl;

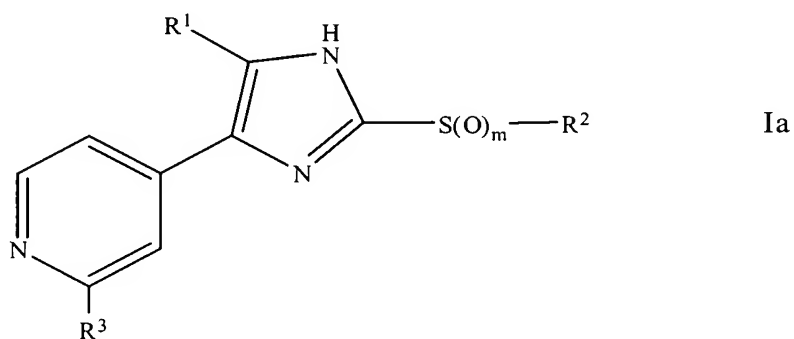
R^8 is C_1 - C_4 -alkyl, C_3 - C_6 -cycloalkyl or phenyl, where the phenyl group may have one or two substituents independently of one another selected from the group consisting of C_1 - C_4 -alkyl, C_1 - C_4 -alkoxy and halogen;

A is straight-chain or branched C_1 - C_6 -alkylene or C_2 - C_6 -alkenylene and

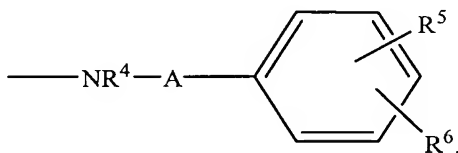
m is 0, 1 or 2;

or a tautomer, an optical isomer or a physiologically acceptable salt thereof.

Claim 17 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 16, which has the formula Ia:



Claim 18 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 16, wherein R^3 is



Claim 19 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 18, wherein A is C₁-C₂-alkylene.

Claim 20 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 18, wherein A is ethylidene.

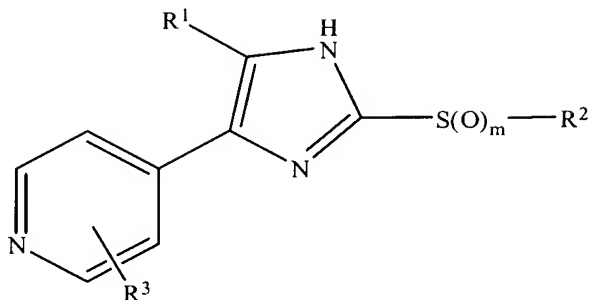
Claim 21 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 18, wherein R⁵ and R⁶ are H.

Claim 22 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 16, wherein R¹ is 4-fluorophenyl.

Claim 23 (Previously Presented): A pharmaceutical composition, comprising at least one compound as claimed in claim 16, and one or more pharmaceutically acceptable carriers and/or additives.

Claim 24 (Previously Presented): A method for treating inflammatory disorders in which TNF- α and IL- β are involved which comprises administering to a person in need of such a treatment an amount of a compound as claimed in claim 16 sufficient to have anti-inflammatory action.

Claim 25 (Previously Presented): A 2-thio-substituted imidazole derivative compound of the formula I



wherein

R^1 is aryl which is substituted by a halogen atom or by halo- C_1 - C_6 -alkyl;

R^2 is selected from the group consisting of

- a) aryl- C_1 - C_4 -alkyl, and
- b) C_1 - C_6 -alkyl;

R^3 is selected from the group consisting of

- a) NR^4R^{10} ,
- b) NR^7COR^{10} ,
- c) OR^{10} , and
- d) NH_2 ;

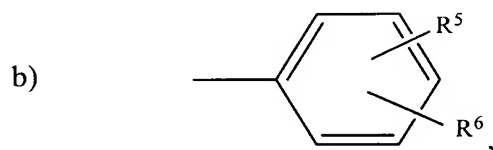
R^4 is H, $-COR^{14}$, $-CO_2R^{14}$, $-CONH_2$, $-CONHR^{14}$, $-CHR^{16}-OR^{14}$, $-CHR^{16}-O-COR^{14}$, $-COC(R^{16})_2-OH$, $-COR^{15}$, SO_2R^{15} or $-SO_2R^{14}$, R^{14} is C_1 - C_6 -alkyl or CF_3 , R^{15} is phenyl or tolyl, and R^{16} is H or C_1 - C_6 -alkyl;

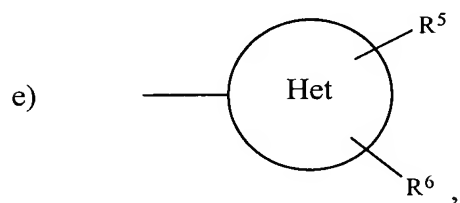
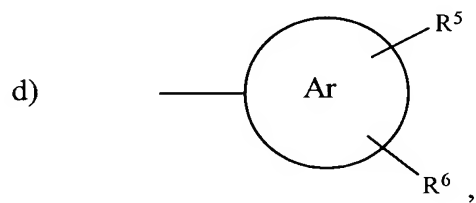
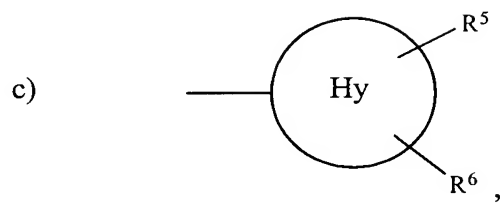
R^5 and R^6 , which may be identical or different, are H, halogen, C_1 - C_6 -alkoxy, C_1 - C_6 -alkyl or halo- C_1 - C_6 -alkyl;

R^7 is H;

R^{10} has one of the meanings below:

- a) A — B,





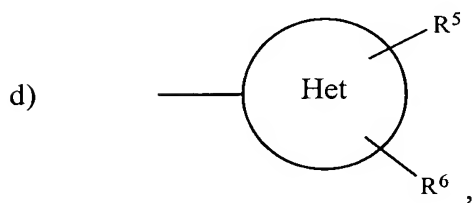
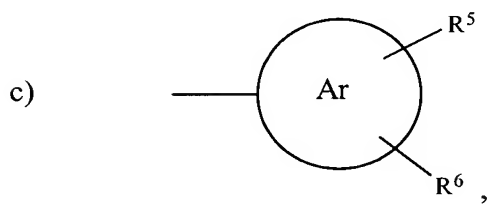
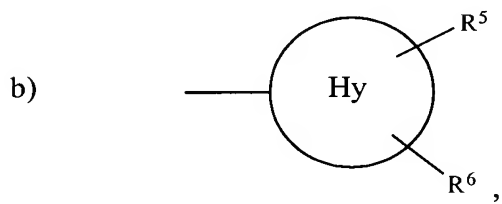
f) C₁-C₆-alkyl which is substituted by 2 phenyl groups, or

g) trifluoromethyl;

A is straight-chain or branched C₁-C₆-alkylene or C₂-C₆-alkenylene;

B is selected from the group consisting of

a) H,



e) $\text{OC}_1\text{-C}_6\text{-alkyl}$, and

f) OH ;

Hy is a 3- to 10-membered non-aromatic mono-, bi- or tricyclic carbocycle which may or may not be fused with a benzene ring;

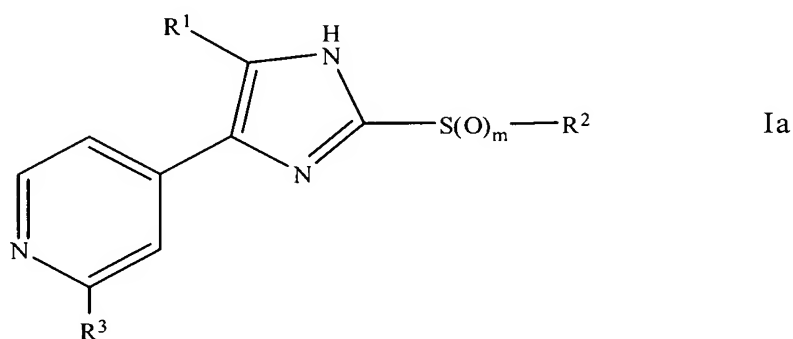
Ar is a 5- or 6-membered aromatic heterocycle which has 1, 2 or 3 heteroatoms independently of one another selected from the group consisting of O, S and N and which may or may not be fused with a benzene ring;

Het is a 5- or 6-membered non-aromatic heterocycle which has 1, 2 or 3 heteroatoms independently of one another selected from the group consisting of O, S and N which may or may not be fused with a benzene ring and which may or may not be bridged bicyclically or tricyclically;

m is 0, 1 or 2;

or a tautomer, an optical isomer or a physiologically acceptable salt thereof.

Claim 26 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 25, which has formula Ia:



Claim 27 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 25, wherein R^{10} is A-B and B is selected from the group consisting of $\text{OC}_1\text{-C}_6\text{-alkyl}$ and OH .

Claim 28 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 25, wherein R^3 is NR^7COR^{10} , and R^{10} is selected from the group consisting of -O-C₁-C₄-alkylphenyl, phenyl and C₂-C₆-alkenyl which is substituted by phenyl.

Claim 29 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 25, wherein A is C₁-C₂-alkylene.

Claim 30 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 25, wherein A is ethylidene.

Claim 31 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 25, wherein R^5 and R^6 are H.

Claim 32 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 25, wherein R^1 is halogen-substituted phenyl or CF₃-substituted phenyl.

Claim 33 (Previously Presented): A pharmaceutical composition, comprising at least one compound as claimed in claim 25, and one or more pharmaceutically acceptable carriers and/or additives.

Claim 34 (Previously Presented): A method for treating inflammatory disorders in which TNF- α and IL- β are involved which comprises administering to a person in need of such a treatment an amount of a compound as claimed in claim 25 sufficient to have anti-inflammatory action.

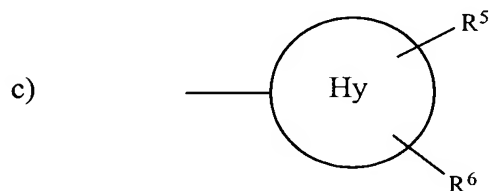
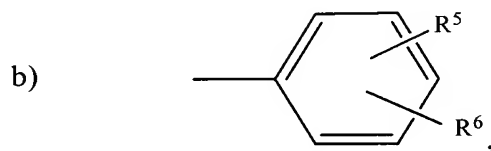
Claim 35 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 25, which is {4-[5-(4-fluorophenyl)-2-methylsulfanyl-1H-imidazol-4-yl]-pyridin-2-yl}-(tetrahydropyran-4-yl)amine.

Claim 36 (Previously Presented): The method according to claim 24, wherein the inflammatory disorder is rheumatoid arthritis.

Claim 37 (Previously Presented): The method according to claim 34, wherein the inflammatory disorder is rheumatoid arthritis.

Claim 38 (Previously Presented): The compound as claimed in claim 25, wherein R^{10} has one of the meanings below:

a) A — B,

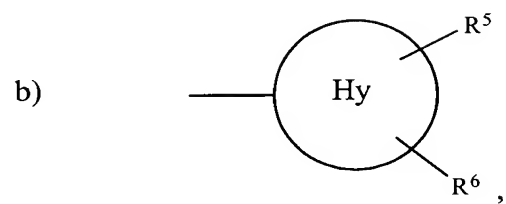


f) C_1 - C_6 -alkyl which is substituted by 2 phenyl groups, or

g) trifluoromethyl;

and when R^{10} is A-B, B is selected from the group consisting of

a) H,



e) OC₁-C₆-alkyl, and

f) OH.